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ABSTRACT

College students in three interpersonal communication classes, all taught by the same instructor, participated in a study designed to develop a grounded theory of the effects of journal keeping on communication effectiveness perceptions. Two classes, comprised of a total of 58 students, were required to maintain semistructured student journals for the entire semester, while one class, comprised of 28 students, did not keep journals but completed term papers instead. The activities of all three classes were essentially the same except for the student journal/term paper variable. During the first and last weeks of class all students completed "Self-Discovery through Self-Analysis" exercises. Analysis of their responses indicated that the journal keeping group increased significantly over the nonjournal keeping group in positive self-assessment of communication behavior, feasibility of solutions to communication problems, and objective and realistic assessment of communication patterns. An analysis of three journals representing a cross-section of the journal keeping classes suggested that as self-disclosure increased self-assessment became more negative, and that as subjects became more realistic about their own communication behaviors they also became more realistic about the behaviors of others. (Tables of data and forms used in evaluating the self-analysis exercises and student journals are included.) (GT)

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STUDENT JOURNALS IN THE COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM:

A REASSESSMENT THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY DEVELOPMENT

by

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Presented at the American Psychological Association
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STUDENT JOURNALS IN THE COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM: A REASSESSMENT THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY DEVELOPMENT[1]

In the last several years journal keeping has become an integral part of many communication courses. Often authors suggest this type of assignment as a way to evaluate a student's depth of understanding of theoretical concepts taught in the interpersonal communication classroom (DeWine, 1976) or as a way to allow the student to explore his/her own self-awareness and feedback received in class (see: teachers' manual for Brooks' text, 1971, p. VIII; teachers' manual for Keltner's text, 1970, p. 22; and Weaver, 1974, p. 311). As used in communication classrooms the student journal is defined as a diary-like record written by each student in the class, reflecting his/her attitudes, feelings, and the expansion of his/her cognitive learning as the course progresses. The journal is semi-structured asking the student to respond to specific course content and activities. The instructor either designs the journal himself or uses one of the published journals presently available (see Phelps and DeWine, 1976; Myers and Myers, 1973; or Rosenfeld, Goldhaber, and Smith, 1975).

It was the purpose of this study to extend previous research on journal keeping by the author (DeWine, 1976 and DeWine, 1977) through an examination of journals generated under experimental conditions. The intent was to develop a grounded theory of journal keeping effects on communication effectiveness perceptions. Previous work used two methods of analysis including: comparsion between journal keeping groups (JK) and non journal keeping groups (NJK) on self assessment instrument over time, and comparsion between JK and NJK on a recall and application examination.

As Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest, the present study sought to generate theory from the data itself. Grounded theory is contrasted with logico-deductive theory in that categories are discovered by examination of the data rather than developing categories and then applying them to the data. Conclusions from the previous studies will be briefly discussed to provide background information on the data used for the grounded theory.

A number of authors have supported the use of journals in the classroom. Conville's (1977) focus on the individual's <u>experience</u> in the communication classroom as a method of learning, ". . . the 'answers' are to be found in the learner's own experience" (p. 118).

Conville, like many others, describes the use of a student journal as something that has "worked" in his classroom. Many think that it is an effective concept based mostly on personal experience. As Phelps and DeWine (1976) explain it:

> By having students participate in interpersonal activities and then answer questions which ask them to relate their interpersonal experiences to the theoretical material in their textbooks, we have found that students are better able to understand their own interpersonal behaviors (p. 3).

In addition to these classroom experiences there is some strong theoretical support for the use of journals to help establish new behavior. In a previous paper (DeWine, 1977) this author developed the application of Kurt Lewin's (1947) model of behavioral change to analyzing the combined effect of communication theories and experience based learning activities in combination with a student journal. Experience based learning activities in combination with a student journal would appear to parallel Lewin's behavioral change process. The activities serve to unfreeze previous ineffective communication behaviors and the student journal helps refreeze new learned behavior.

Support for the use of journals comes from a variety of disciplines other than communication. Pearson (1965) reports on an experiment at the Menninger Clinic which demonstrated the value of short daily "directed writing" as a counseling technique, Tebbutt (1970) suggests that a type of journal be used as feedback within an organizational setting, Baldwin (1942) developed a system called "personal structure analysis" to analyze personal correspondence, Allport's classic text (1942) and more recently Lauer and Goldfield (1970) conclude that a number of benefits can be derived from some form of a self-analytic written tool, Faber (1953) suggests a heightened sense of involvement with one's own ideas when some form of written communication is used and Sainty (1972) concludes that a diary-journal can be an aid to group leaders and counselors. Other authors make similar claims (see: Bastien and Jacobs, 1974; Leuner, 1969; Phillips, 1966; Tuckman and Ziegler, 1968).

While a large number of authors support the use of journals, a much smaller number have actually attempted to specifically analyze their impact under experimental conditions. Some researchers have used content analysis schemes to analyze personal writings (see: Andrews and Muhlhan, 1943 and Osgood and Walker, 1959) while more recent researchers have attempted to experimentally assess the impact of journal keeping on self assessment and perceptions (Baron, 1978; Bohn, 1975; Collins, 1976; DeWine, 1977; Dreussi, 1976; and Nichols, 1973). These experimental studies have attempted the difficult task of analyzing the actual affect of journal keeping on the writers themselves.

This author initially designed a content analysis study as a response to the need for research on the effect of journal keeping. The research question of

interest was: Do students who maintain personal journals in combination with participation in experience based activities differ significantly in the perception they have of themselves as effective communicators from those students who do not maintain journals but participate in experienced based activities in an interpersonal communication class? Journals actually produced under the following experimental conditions were utilized for the grounded theory development.

Three classes of interpersonal communication, all taught by the same instructor, participated in the study. A non-experience based textbook was used and all classes followed the same procedures: lectures, discussions, outside readings, and extensive use of instructional games. Two classes were randomly assigned to the journal keeping condition and one to the non-journal keeping condition for the entire semester. Eighty-six students, mostly freshmen and sophomores, from a variety of disciplines including business, education, health, arts and science, and fine arts, served as subjects. Twenty-eight students in the non-journal keepers group (or NJK) participated in instructional activities without journal assignments, while fifty-eight students participated in the same activities but were required to maintain a student journal (Journal Keepers or JK). The NJK completed a term paper, due at the termination of the course, in place of the journal. Each student keeping a journal received written and/or oral feedback on each of seventeen journal entries whose instructions and design were selected from the Phelps and DeWine (1976) text 2. All three classes were essentially the same except for the variable of a student journal or term paper.

During the first and last week of class all students completed the "Self-Discovery through Self-Analysis" (SDSA) exercise from the Phelps and DeWine journal (see: Appendix A). This questionnaire asks students to assess the over-all effectiveness of their own communication behaviors, list their strengths and weaknesses as a communicator, describe techniques for overcoming weaknesses, and identify communication situations that cause them the most difficulty. The intent was to compare the NJK with the JK to determine differences along these dimensions from the beginning of the course to the end. The specific research question to be answered was: Are there significant differences in students' self-perceptions as regards their objectivity, positiveness, and analytical nature between those who maintain student journals and those who do not? First a content analysis scheme was used to analyze this data.

Holsti (1969) defines content analysis as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p. 14). In this instance the researcher was concerned with

the analysis of a self-report instrument (SDSA) to identify characteristics of the message found there. Holsti suggests several types of comparisons that can be made between written documents including a comparison of messages over time "from which the analyst may draw inferences about trends" (p. 28) and comparing messages produced by two or more different sources to "relate theoretically significant attributes of communicators to differences in the messages they produce" (p. 30). He also suggests that an analysis of the message can lead us to inferences about the author. "What are the meanings, associations, values, motives, or intentions of the communicator that can be inferred from his messages?" (p. 32). In this instance comparison content analysis was made of self-analysis inventories (SDSA) from the beginning of a class to inventories completed at the conclusion of that same class. In addition comparisions were made between two separate groups of authors (the JK and NJK). The intent was to infer characteristics and changes in characteristics of the authors based on their self-report writings in the SDSA.

The study called for analysis of self-report documents in seven areas: self-evaluation (an overall evaluation of the degree of positiveness of the writer's self-analysis), objectivity of measures (how objectively the writer was able to describe measures he/she might use to overcome weaknesses in communication), feasibility of measures (how feasible or possible these measures appeared to be), situation: intimate to public (an identification of whether communication problems occurred more often in intimate one-to-one situations or in public encounters), realism (an evaluation of the degree of realism present in the writer's analysis of why these particular situations cause communication problems), and finally counting the number of communication strengths and weaknesses listed by the writer when analyzing his/her own communication behaviors. These categories were derived from the specific questions asked on the "Self-Discovery through Self-Analysis" or SDSA (see: Appendix A). Two graduate students, unfamilar with the goals of the project, were trained to evaluate the SDSA. They completed these analyses independently of each other and without knowledge of the conditions under which the inventories were written. The order in which the inventories were read was random. They used the following SDSA evaluation scales:

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

The evaluation of content units is suggested by Osgood, Saporta, and Nunnally (1956). Their "Evaluative Assertion Analysis" provides a coding scheme that allows the rater to assign values to verbal connectors and common meaning terms. In this instance an evaluation of the written document (or SDSA) was made with the intent of determining changes in self perceptions over time within both the experimental

FIGURE 1

SDSA EVALUATION SCALES

1. SELF-EVALUATION

On the following scale rate the tone of the writer's response to the first question: "How effective are you as an interpersonal communication?"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
sees self mostly in negative terms			average			sees self mostly in positive terms

2. OBJECTIVITY OF MEASURES

Evaluate the writers response to question #4: "List specific measures which you could take to overcome your weaknesses."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
writer describes measures extremely subjectively			average amount of objectivity			describes measures extremely objectively

3. FEASIBILITY OF MEASURES

Evaluate how feasible the measures listed by the writer appear to be in question #4.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
measures seem not feasible or possible			average			measures appear very possible and logical

4. SITUATION: INTIMATE TO PUBLIC

Rate how intimate or public the situation is as describe in question no. 5: "Describe situations in which you have the most difficulty communicating."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intimate			Social (not intimate and not completely public)			Public

Figure 1 continued

5. WHY DIFFICULT: REALISTIC TO UNREALISTIC

Analyze the writer's response to question no. 6: "Discuss why the situations described in question 5 cause you difficulty in communication." Evaluate how realistic the writer is.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
writer's reason seem very unrealistic			average			writer's reasons seem very realistic

6. Count the number of strength listed for question no. 2.

7. Count the number of weaknesses listed for question no. 3.

(JK) and control (NJK) groups as well as differences in self perception between these groups.

RESULTS

One of Holsti's (1969) criteria for the validity of categories is that they must be independent, i.e., any one categorization of an analysis unit cannot affect another's categorization. To test the independent nature of the categories designed for this study a Pearson correlation test was administered between all combinations of the first five categories (the last two categories, number of strengths and weaknesses were not included in this analysis since different coding schemes were used for these two parts). As expected, among ten possible correlation scores only one accounted for more than 50% of the common variance.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Feasibility and Objectivity had a high correlation (r=.80). These two measurements analyzed the same section of the written document and were determined to be not significantly different from one another to be independent. As a result, the feasibility measure was eliminated from further analysis since the researcher decided that this measure was less clearly identified than the objectivity measure. As a consequence the remaining four categories (self-evaluation, objectivity, intimate to public, and realism) were assumed to be independent separate categories.

There are additional statistically significant correlations (self-evaluation and objectivity = .16, self-evaluation and realism = .36, and objectivity and realism = .41 all reach a statistical significance of .01 or greater). However, since the largest of these correlations (objectivity and realism at .41) would only account for 16% of the variance, while measuring two separate parts of the written document, they remain on a conceptual level, independent. The magnitude of r is of primary concern in this case.

Interrater reliability coefficients were derived from Holsti's formula (1969, p. 140). Correct ratings were determined as follows: when the two raters scored a section of the SDSA in the same direction for the first five categories and when they had exactly the same number on the final two measurements, their ratings were counted correct. For example, if the two raters each scored an item as either 1, 2, or 3, it was counted as correct, as was true for 5, 6, or 7. When an item was scored as 4 (average) the other rater had to have the identical number in order to be scored correct. For strengths and weaknesses where the raters were simply counting the total number listed, the exact same score had to be recorded in order that they count as correct. Out of a total of 2,170 ratings the two raters made 2, 036 correct ratings for an interrater

TABLE 1

PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN

CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES

	Self Evaluation	Objectivity	Feasibility	Intimate-Public	Realism
Self-Evaluation		.1689 S=.018	.0483 s=.275	-.1243 s=.062	.3664 s=.001
Objectivity			.8019 s=.001	.0058 s=.471	.4132 s=.001
Feasibility				-.0075 s=.463	.2519 s=.001
Intimate-Public					-.0200 s=.403

reliability of .93.

The 86 subjects produced a total of 155 SDSA with 58 written by the JK group at time one, (first week of class) 46 at time two (last week of class) and 23 written by the NJK group at time one and 28 at time two. The reason for differences in the number completed by each group was due to absences from class on days when pre and posttests were administered.

Since the categories had been determined independent, simple t-tests were conducted on the SDSA within the JK group between time one to time two, and on the SDSA within the NJK group between time one to time two. Both the JK and NJK groups had significant differences from time one to time two but not in the same categories.

The JK group had a significant increase in the positiveness of their overall evaluation of personal communication effectiveness from the beginning of class to the end of the class ($p < .001$). They also become more realistic about why certain situations gave them more difficulty when communicating with others ($p. < .01$). On the intimate to public scale, which identified the type of situation in which they had more difficulty communicating, the group moved from identifying less intimate situations to more intimate ones ($p. < .05$). Since both means were below the average level, this is seen as degrees of intimacy rather than moving from public to intimate. In addition the JK group listed significantly more strengths ($p. < .05$) at the end of the course and significantly fewer weaknesses, ($p. < .01$). The NJK group, on the other hand, had significant differences in two of the same categories (self-evaluation $p. < .001$ and realism $p. < .001$) but unlike the experimental group did not have a significant difference in the intimate to public scale or either of the strengthes or weaknesses scales. The NJK group did have a significant increase on the objectivity measure ($p. < .01$).

The results lend support to the belief that the use of student journals will significantly affect students' perceptions of themselves as communicators. The JK increased the positiveness of their own evaluations of personal communication behaviors. The number of strengths increased and the number of weaknesses decreased for the experimental group but not for the control group. It would seem that a continual self-analysis throughout the course in the form of a student journal, results in an overall more positive self-concept as a communicator. After continually relating their experiences in instructional activities to theoretical concepts discussed in texts, students appear to have developed a better image of themselves. Both groups became more realistic in their assessment of causes for communication problems. Perhaps because of the nature of the course itself, students became more objective and realistic than previously.

In order to compare differences between the experimental and control groups an analysis of covariance was the statistical test utilized. Kerlinger (1964) suggests this method of analyzing differences between intact groups where subjects cannot be assigned to treatments at random but where treatments can be assigned to groups at random, as was the case in this study. Analysis of covariance is a form of analysis of variance that tests for the significance of differences between means of final experimental data which have been adjusted to account for the correlation between the dependent variable and one or more covariates. In this case the pretest was used as the covariate.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

Table two reports the results of the analysis of covariance between the experimental and control group on each of the SDSA scale variables. In this case SDSA forms had to be matched for each subject thus causing some forms to be eliminated due to lack of identification information or absence from class. 36 experimental group SDSA and 20 control group SDSA forms were used for the analysis. The experimental group increased significantly greater than the control group on two measures at the .05 level and increased significantly more than the control group on two other measures at the .10 level. The experimental group's self evaluation became more positive than the control group ($p. < .05$) and their solutions to communication problems became more feasible than the control group ($p. < .05$). On two other measures, the objectivity with which subjects evaluated their own communication behavior and the degree of realism present in their self evaluations, increased more than the control group ($p. < .10$). This would suggest that those students who maintained journals throughout the course became more positive about their communication abilities, were able to identify more feasible solutions to communication problems they were having, and increased in objectivity and realism in their own self-assessments. When comparing the two groups using ANCOVR there were no significant differences between the two groups on the intimate to public scale nor on strengths or weaknesses.

In a previous study (DeWine, J. 1977) an analysis was made between these same two groups of students on a recall and application examination test. The study was an attempt to determine the amount of retention and ability to apply facts to interpersonal situations between the JK and NJK. A significant difference was found between the two groups on the overall test score with the JK scoring higher than the NJK.

While these results are helpful in assessing effects of journal keeping on self assessment of communication ability, there is an additional need to examine the actual

TABLE 2

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE ON SDSA SCALES

Scale Variables	N	Adjusted Group Means	Mean Square	F-value	P
Self-Evaluation					
Experimental Group	36	5.606	3.467	4.132	.04*
Control Group	20	5.057			
Objectivity					
Experimental Group	36	5.177	2.531	2.934	.09**
Control Group	20	4.654			
Feasibility					
Experimental Group	36	4.634	5.701	5.014	.02*
Control Group	20	3.833			
Intimate to Public					
Experimental Group	36	3.218	.0462	.018	.891
Control Group	20	3.156			
Reality					
Experimental Group	36	5.945	3.533	3.209	.07**
Control Group	20	5.273			
Strengths					
Experimental Group	36	2.552	.009	.007	.932
Control Group	20	2.579			
Weaknesses					
Experimental Group	36	1.648	.053	.117	.733
Control Group	20	1.582			

*Significant at .05
**Significant at .10

journals themselves to discover what kind of content they contain and how they changed over time. In order to accomplish this the author used Glaser and Strauss' (1967) method for developing grounded theory. Three journals were voluntarily submitted for use in this analysis. The three journals represented a cross section of the class in terms of quality and quanity of journal entries as determined by the instructor. One journal was below average, one average, and one above average in length of entries as well as quality of entries. All entries in the the three journals were read yielding 16 entries for each of three journals or 48 units of analysis, with approximately 10,000 words of script. The author read each unit and identified dimensions its contents suggested. These dimensions were used in developing categories for analyzing each unit. A second blind judge was used to varify the categories and evaluate each entry on every dimension identified. The two raters had an interrater reliability of .82. The following were the categories identified and the description of the content within those categories. Each rater evaluated the content assigned to the category on a scale from one to seven (see: Figure #2).

SELF ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNICATION ABILITY

Initially subjects seemed to evaluate their communication abilities in mostly positive terms. Phrases like, "I think I made a good first impression...I am able to be a little more objective about how I communicate by stepping out of the discussion and seeing what is really happening...I'm trying hard not to categorize people during initial contacts..." were fairly typical during the first several entries. During the fifth, sixth, and seventh entries however, students' assessment of themselves tended to become more negative. Typical comments included: "I realize why it hurts so much when you don't get letters back from loved ones... you're disconfirming them in a way, rejecting them and that's exactly what I'm doing!...I should let down my facade more...I'm just always waiting to close up if I want to...When I do try to communicate my problems I think people act disinterested...I am trying to be more honest in my feedback to others but I'm still afraid of being so blunt that hard feelings will arise...Part of the reason I hold back feedback from others is because I have not really been in tune with the situation...I have been so self-centered that I have not been able to get out of myself to note non-verbal cues that would tell me how someone is reacting." During the last portion of the journal the subjects self evaluation again became very positive with clearer objectives for the kinds of goals they would like to

FIGURE 2

EVALUATION OF JOURNAL CATEGORIES FORM

Rate each journal entry on the following scales.

name of journal writer_____ journal entry no._____

1. SELF ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNICATION ABILITY

   On the following scale rate the tone of the writer's response on how effective they see themselves as interpersonal communicators? (leave out entries no.: 1,3,&9)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
sees self mostly in negative terms			average			sees self mostly in positive terms

2. SELF-DISCLOSURE Rate how much self-disclosure is present in this entry.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very closed, little self-disclosure			average			very open, much self-disclosure

3. REALISTIC VIEW OF SELF How realistic does the writer seem to be in evaluating self (leave out entry #1,3,9)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very unrealistic			average			extremely realistic

4. REALISTIC VIEW OF OTHERS How realistic does the writer seem to be in evaluating others (leave out 5,6,7,13,14,15)

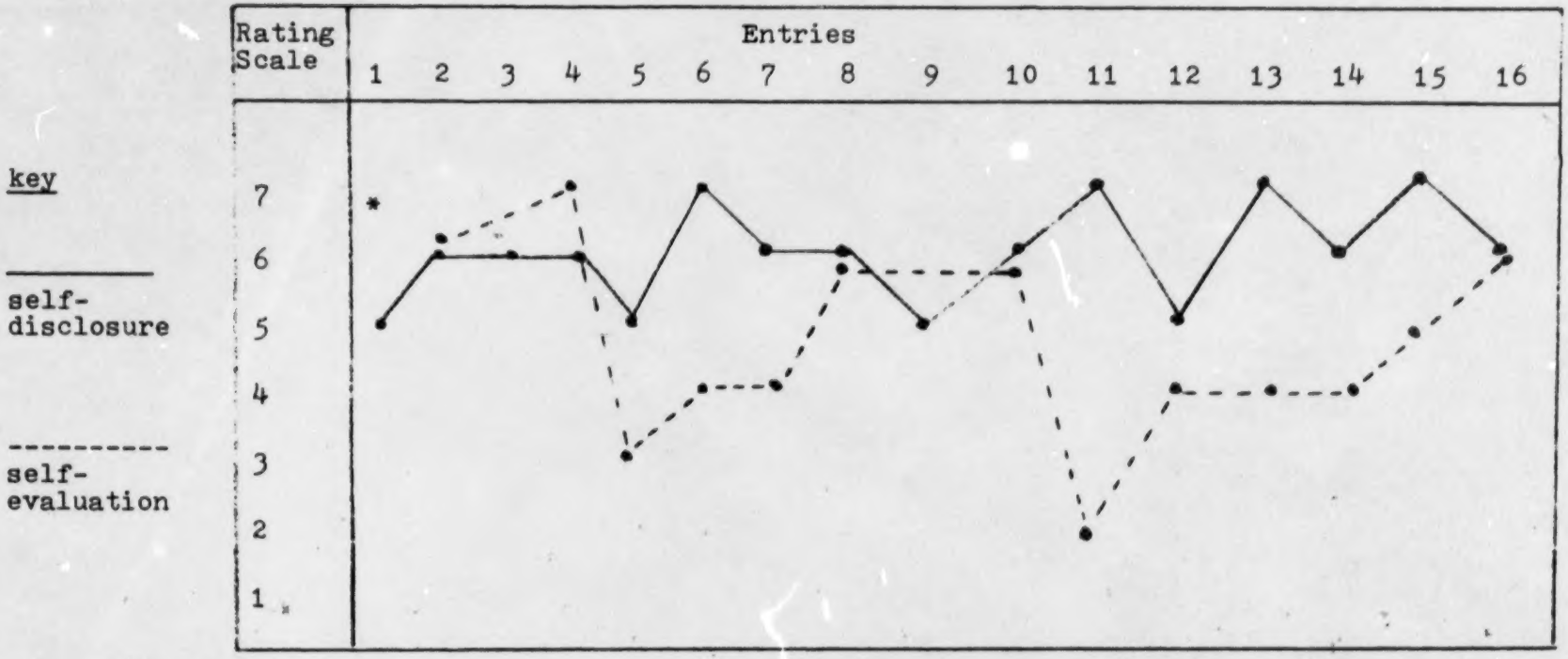
5. Overall impression of this entry (write on back side)

*Entries not requesting such information were eliminated from analysis.

TABLE 3

COMPARSION OF SELF-DISCLOSURE AND SELF-EVALUATION

Journal #1

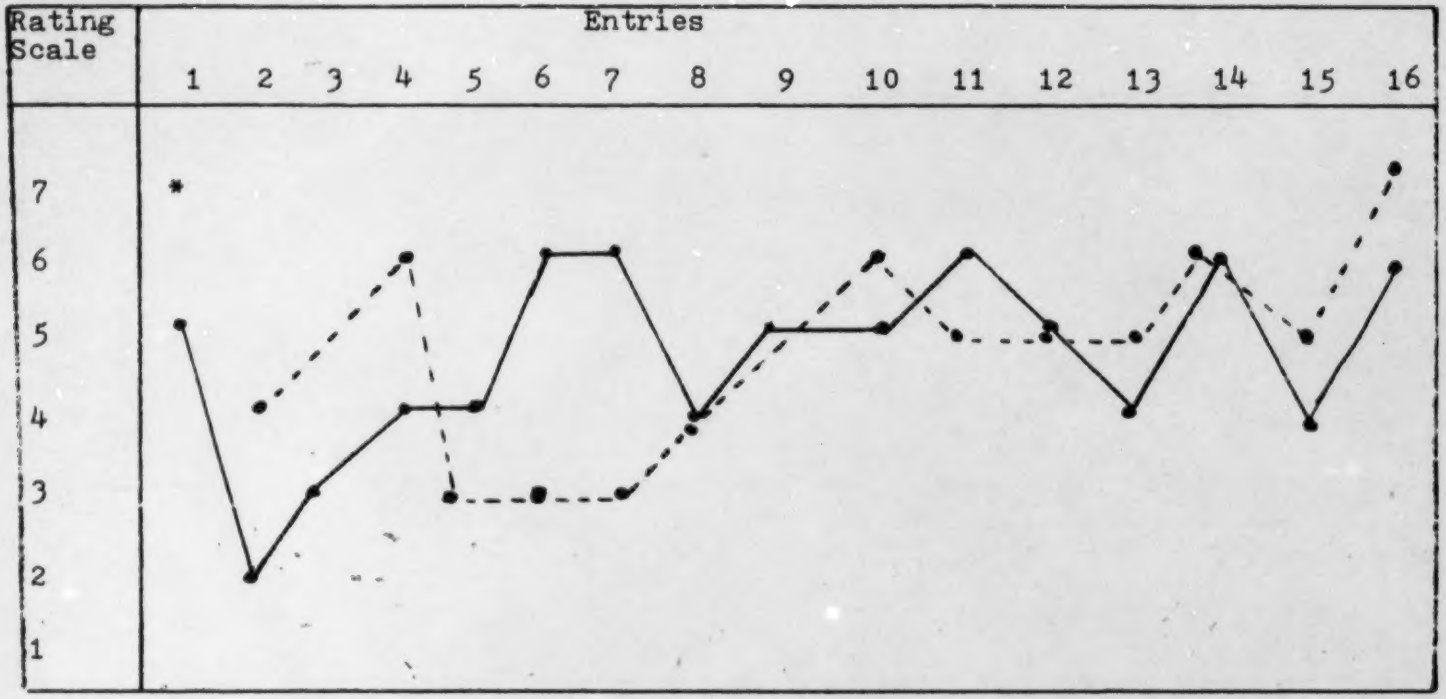


* High scores represent positive self-evaluation and greater self-disclosure

TABLE 4

COMPARSION OF SELF-DISCLOSURE AND SELF-EVALUATION

Journal #2

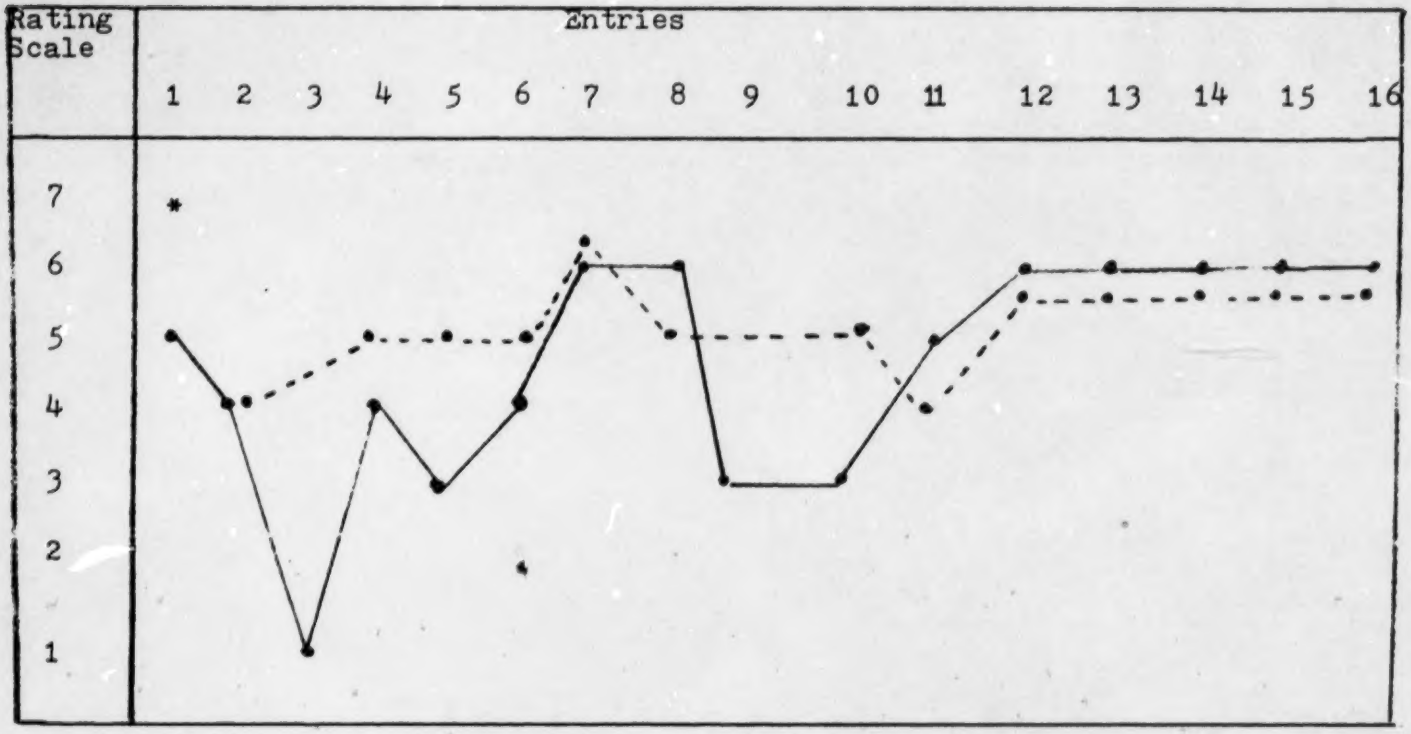


* High scores represent positive self-evaluation and greater self-disclosure

TABLE 5

COMPARSION OF SELF-DISCLOSURE AND SELF-EVALUATION

Journal #3



key

_____ self-disclosure

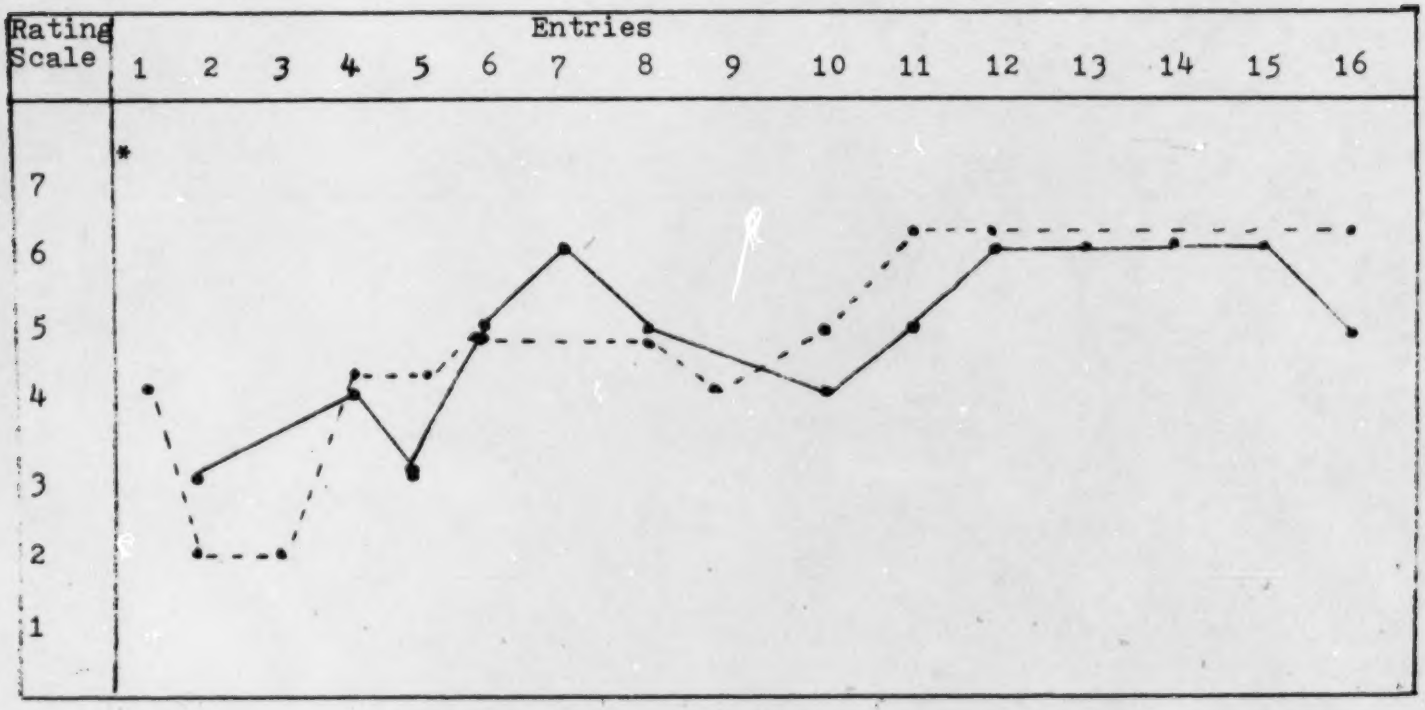
--------- self-evaluation

* High scores represent positive self-evaluation and greater self-disclosure

TABLE 6

COMPARSION OF REALISTIC VIEW OF SELF WITH REALISTIC VIEW OF OTHERS

Journal #1



key

realistic view of self

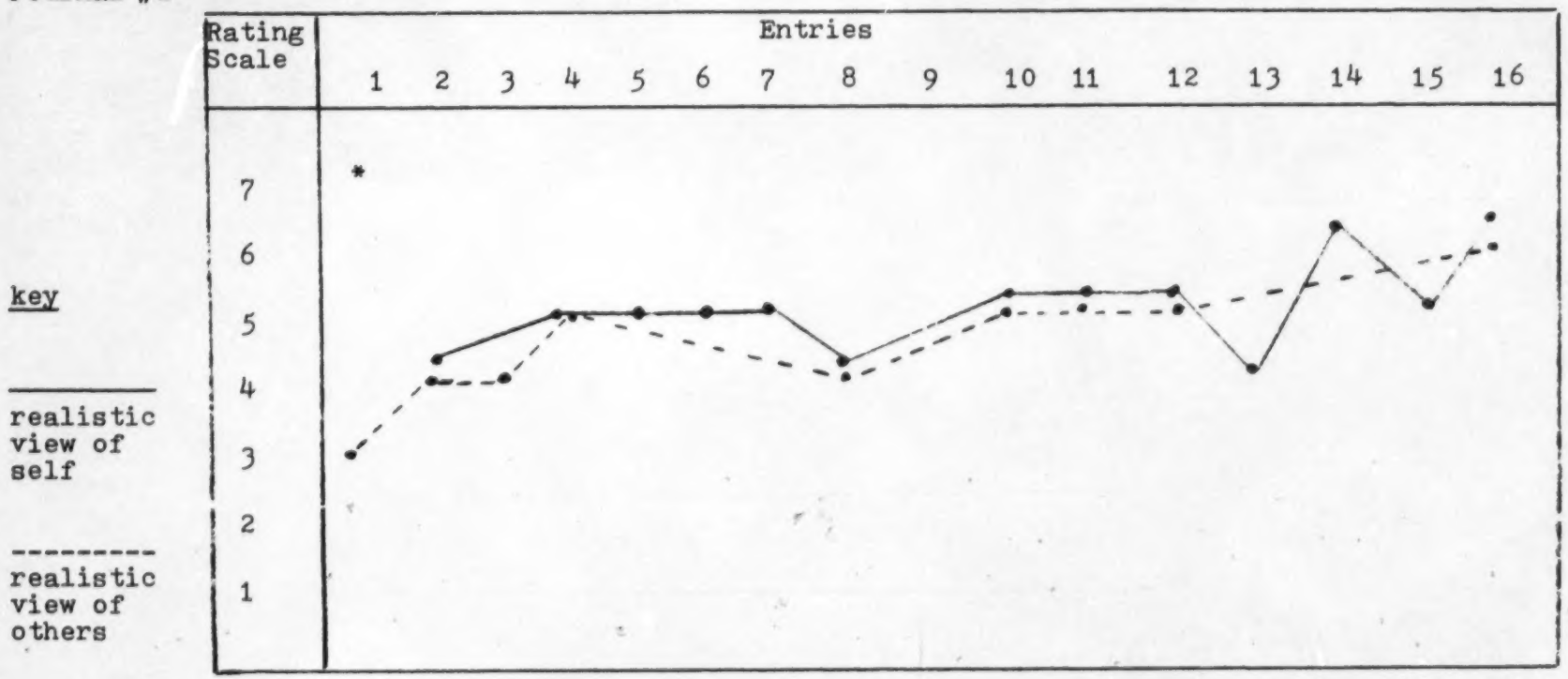
realistic view of others

* High scores indicate greater realism

TABLE 7

COMPARSION OF REALISTIC VIEW OF SELF WITH REALISTIC VIEW OF OTHERS

Journal #2

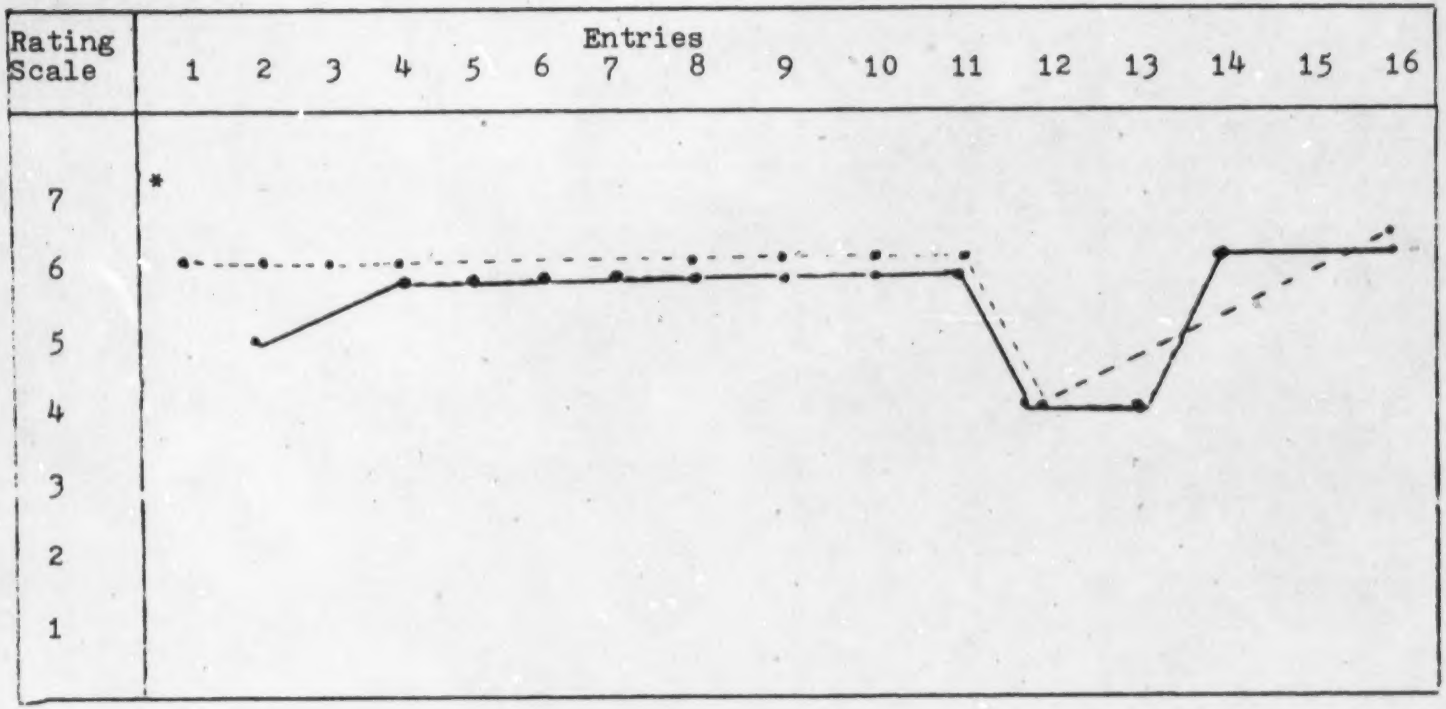


* Higher scores indicate greater realism

TABLE 8

COMPARSION OF REALISTIC VIEW OF SELF WITH REALISTIC VIEW OF OTHERS

Journal #3



* Higher scores indicate greater realism

set for themselves. Examples from actual journals include such comments as: "I've kind of brought myself into focus by observing others communication patterns ...I am learning to be more assertive and can tell that I am really changing...On the whole I think I am more aware of myself, my feelings, my habits, than before... I'm beginning to accept myself and learn about how I can communicate better with others...I think the skill that I can consciously work with the easiest is non-verbal cues..." It would appear that as subjects continue to look at their own behavior their evaluation goes from positive to negative and back to positive. This category seems to relate directly with the next one, self-disclosure.

SELF-DISCLOSURE

Both raters evaluated the level of self-disclosure present in each journal entry. Initially self-disclosure seemed low with comments about self and others being very brief and sketchy. As the journals progressed self-disclosure increased. An examination of Tables 3, 4, and 5 (for each of the journals) indicates a trend in the interaction between the positiveness of self assessment and the amount of self-disclosure. As self-disclosure increased the self assessment tended to become more negative and when self-disclosure decreased the self assessment tended to be more positive. As subjects began to analyze themselves in greater depth they became more aware of communication problems thus seeing themselves more negatively. All three journals however, indicated high self-disclosure and positive self assessment with the last two or three journal entries.

[INSERT TABLES 3, 4, AND 5 HERE]

REALISTIC VIEW OF SELF AND REALISTIC VIEW OF OTHERS

Subjects not only analyzed their own behavior but frequently attempted to describe and analyze the communication behavior of others. Although the raters evaluated these two categories separately and at random, the degree of realism present in the subjects' analysis of self and of others closely parallel each other (see: Tables 7,8, and 9). As subjects became more or less realistic in their own communication behaviors they also became more or less realistic in their analysis of others' communication behaviors as well. It would appear that subjects tended to apply the same standards to themselves as to others. Consequently we would expect that as self analysis becomes more negative, perceptions of others' communication behavior may become more negative as well. Positive evaluation of self will influence analysis of others' behavior in a similar manner.

[INSERT TABLES 6, 7, AND 8 HERE]

This study would suggest that subjects who maintained a semi-structured journal over a period of an entire term (or approximately 3 months) increased

significantly over a control group who did not maintain a journal in the following areas: increased positive self assessment of communication behavior, solutions to communication problems become more feasible, and more objective and realistic assessment of communication patterns. When actual journals were examined to discover categories of content the results indicated the following trends: as self-disclosure increased self assessment became more negative; as subjects became more realistic about their own communication behaviors they also became more realistic about the behaviors of other thus we could expect that as self analysis changes, analysis of others' behaviors change in the same way.

There are a number of factors that could have influenced the results of this study. Even with the use of analysis of covariance some would urge that the use of intact groups will always make results less clear. This author would urgue however, that for research of this nature (classroom or instructional research) intact groups are usually impossible to avoid and the analysis of covariance adequately accounts for variances within the groups. The journal written by these subjects were semi-structured and the results might have been different with completely structured journals or completely unstructured journals. Subjects were asked to specifically analyze communication behaviors in relation to concepts studied in the class.

Since so many classroom instructors believe that student journals help individuals to become more aware of their own communication patterns and thus make the content of the course more meaningful to them, it is important that research on the specific effects of such writing activity be analyzed. This study lends some support to the use of student journals in the basic interpersonal communication classroom and raises some interesting questions for further exploration. Would students benefit more from an entirely unstructured journal where they explore whatever aspects of communication behavior are meaningful to them? What is the correlation between the effect of just maintaining the journals and the effect of the feedback given by the instructor on each of the journal entries? How does the interpersonal relationship between the instructor and the student affect the amount of openness and self-disclosure present in the journal? These are important questions to answer before making concrete judgments as to the appropiateness and validity of using student journals in a basic interpersonal communication class.

FOOTNOTES

1 The author would like to thank Ms. Sandy Smith and Mr. Tim Snyder for their assistance with this research.

2 The following journal entries from the Phelps and DeWine Journal were used: Perception of Instructor, Dyadic Encounter, Communication Model, Perception Formation, Inverted Pyramid, Johari Window, Feedback Exercise #4, My Personal Space, Perception and Communication, Listening with Empathy, Male-Female Game, Conflict Inventory, Helping Inventory, Experiencing Helping, Self Assessment, Trust Walk, Self-Discovery through Self-Analysis.

Appendix A

Self-Discovery through Self-Analysis

Objectives To allow you to discover information about yourself through a self-analysis inventory.

To allow you an opportunity for introspection and growth.

Procedure Write a brief answer to each of the following questions. After the exercise is over, you may wish to go back over your answers and expand them.

1. How effective are you an an interpersonal communicator?
2. List your communication strengths.
3. List your communication weaknesses.
4. List specific measures which you could take to overcome your weaknesses.
5. Describe situations in which you have the most difficulty communicating.
6. Discuss why the situations described in question 5 cause you difficulty in communication.

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